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Prof. Arnold J. Toynbee

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A.J.T.

SIG. Arnold J. Toynbee

Date 27 June, 1971.

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in the Nations of the Modern World Series, 1926; A Journey to China, 1931; Editor, British Commonwealth Relations, 1934; A Study of History, Vols i-iii, 1934, Vols iv-vi, 1939 (Abridgement of Vols i-vi, 1946); Vols vii-x, 1954; Vol. xi, 1958; Vol. xii, 1961; Civilisation on Trial, 1948; War and Civilisation, 1951; The World and the West (1952 Reith Lectures), 1953; An Historian's Approach to Religion (Edinburgh Gifford Lectures, 1953 and 1954); Christianity Among the Religions of the World, 1958; East to West: a Journey Round the World, 1958; Hellenism, 1959; Between Oxus and Jumna, 1961; (with T.P. Toynbee) Comparing Notes: a Dialogue across a Generation, 1963; Between Niger and Nile, 1956; Hannibal's Legacy, 1965; Change and Habit, 1966; Acquaintances, 1967; Between Maule and Amazon, 1967; (co-author) Man's Concern with Death, 1968; (ed) The Crucible of Christianity, 1968; Cities of Destiny, 1969; Experiences, 1969; Some Problems of Greek History, 1969; Cities on the Move, 1970.

Main points covered in the interview

Prof. Toynbee briefly described his meetings with Shri Jawaharlal Nehru in U.K. and in India. He talked of Nehru's "binocular vision" - an outcome of his mastery over Indian and British cultures. Nehru also had equally deep connections with the sophisticated world and the local country people. Prof. Toynbee then discussed Nehru's disillusionment about China and thought that China was touchy about frontiers imposed on her, when she was weak, by powerful imperialist states like Britain. But the relationship between Gandhi and Nehru - men of entirely different backgrounds - intrigued Prof. Toynbee. He recalled his hearing Gandhi once in London and concluded that Gandhi was "an unconscious prophet of the atomic age", who discovered the right technique for bringing about political changes without destruction. He thought that Nehru tried to use this technique into international relations. The world, according to Prof. Toynbee, will react increasingly favourably to this new attitude. Prof. Toynbee remembered his seeing Nehru for the last time in 1961 when the late Prime Minister appeared weary and particularly sensitive of criticisms in the Parliament - an institution which he took "very seriously". Nehru, in the opinion of Prof. Toynbee, will be remembered as the leader of the principal liberated country in Asia and as one who was more successful in dealing with the problems of independence than all his contemporaries.

Oral History Interview

with

Prof. Arnold J. Toynbee

in England on

August 2, 1967

by

Shri B.R. Nanda

for The Nehru Memorial Museum & Library

<u>B.R. Nanda</u>: When did you meet Mr Nehru for the first time?

<u>Arnold J. Toynbee</u>: I meet him in London between the wars. I cannot remember the exact year but it was in a common English friend's house, a lady. Would you like to hear about the incident which .....

<u>Nanda</u>: Certainly.

<u>Toynbee</u>: My wife and I came in, and Mr. Nehru was there in the room talking about politics. He had just been let out of prison by the British in India, and for a holiday he had come to London. They used to say, as a joke, that prison was his holiday, as he had time to read and write in prison and not at home. Anyway, it was a luncheon party. He was there. We came in, and then the door suddenly opened. A British general appeared at the door, and when he saw Mr. Nehru, his jaw dropped. He was very much abashed, and it turned out at the end that he was the man who had given the official order to put Mr. Nehru in prison this last time. For some reason or other, out of mischief, or mixing things up, the lady had asked him to meet Mr. Nehru at lunch. Of

course, I wondered how Mr. Nehru would take this. He immediately saw that it was amusing, and, far from being grim or stiff, he just teased the general and manoeuvred him into becoming more and more of polite and propitiatory. This was my first immediate experience of the Gandhian spirit - an all out political struggle, but no hatred or personal animus - a very unusual combination.

Nanda: As Gandhi said, the system could be hated but not the man.

Toynbee: Yes, exactly. Mr. Nehru had been speaking very fiercely about politics, but there was no fierceness in his personal relations.

Nanda: A very interesting incident.

Toynbee: And also very characteristic. I immediately got the man as he was.

Nanda: After that, when did you meet him?

Toynbee: After that it was in 1956. I was in India and I was being given an honorary degree by the University of Delhi. I was staying in the Ashoka Hotel. As you know, you had to cross about seven Delhis to reach the University from there, and, for some reason or other, we were very late. Mr. Nehru was going to be present at the ceremony, and I was horrified at the thought of the Prime Minister wasting his time, waiting till I turned up. As we approached, within about 200 yards of the University, a figure came

running towards us. It was Mr. Nehru himself. He had slipped out through his guards, and they were searching for him.

<u>Nanda</u>: He was worried about you.

<u>Toynbee</u>: He found us and brought us in. His security men were rather alarmed. In fact he liked doing this to them. Now this is characteristic. He was not in the least annoyed, though every minute of his time was highly valuable, of course. That was again like him, that he should turn up just because a private person was getting an honorary degree; most Prime Ministers would not do that.

<u>Nanda</u>: When did you read the <u>Glimpses of World History</u>? How did it impress you, when you read it?

<u>Toynbee</u>: Well, it gives the very individual point of view of a man who was equally at home in two worlds. He was entirely at home in Britain. He was entirely Indian too. He could see the world through Indian eyes and through Western eyes; and both these points of view come out in his book, it seems to me. This is unusual. Most of us are shut up inside one culture, one tradition only. He was master of two, perhaps more.

<u>Nanda</u>: That gave him an advantage in viewing the thing from a larger perspective.

<u>Toynbee</u>: It gave him a binocular vision - telescopic.

Nanda: That is the precise word.

Toynbee: Yes.

Nanda: It is very simple in style because it was written in the form of letters to his daughter, as if he was talking to her.

Toynbee: And that was a kind of style that came natural to him, too. Nothing pompous or stilted.

Nanda: But it is simpler than, for example, An Autobiography, which is also fairly conversational. And the letters change in style as she grows older. The later letters are, may I say so, more literary than the earlier ones. This means that there is a conscious effort to be simple.

Toynbee: He had a very personal relation with the country people in U.P. in his own district. That was interesting, because here was a man who belonged to their world but also belonged to another world as well. Yet they did not feel shy of him. They did not feel that he was alienated from them at all. I never saw him among the local people, but it was most interesting to note that he could keep this connection with a very sophisticated world on the one hand and with the local country people on the other hand, and have the country people's confidence.

Nanda: Again, as you said, binocular vision, as an aristocrat, an intellectual aristocrat...

Toynbee: He was an obvious aristocrat.

Nanda: But at the same time he was able to understand imaginatively the problems of the common people. Again, there is another contrast and his ability to synthesise.

Toynbee: This is remarkable. He was an aristocrat of many generations' standing. His family, after all, had been in high public service for a very long time.

Nanda: Did you read the Discovery of India?

Toynbee: That I have not read. No.

Nanda: When you meet him, did you have occasion to discuss the international situation, the problems of history and politics and so on?

Toynbee: The last time I met him, which was the year in which Lady Mountbatten died, it was in the middle of a lecture which I was giving that the news of her death came. He was deeply affected. That was in 1961, I think.

Nanda: About that time.

Toynbee: Yes. Anyway, I was told that he wanted to see me. I was in India giving the second lecture in honour of your first Minister of Education. He (Nehru) had given the first.

I was rather shy of taking his time. I was told that he really wanted to see me, but I decided that anyway I would not talk about China. But immediately - this was sad and tragic - he began to talk about China. It was weighing so heavily on his mind, though the Chinese trouble had not yet blown up to anything like their later proportions. However, it had already begun. He said the Chinese entirely upset his expectations, and he could not get over it.

Nanda: Did he talk to you as to how the Chinese were behaving, what he expected from them, and what they were doing?

Toynbee: He did, yes. He opened the subject immediately. He talked about hardly anything else. I was much affected by this, for he had always been so buoyant, youthful in a sense. He had carried his load so lightly. Now I saw the load pressing down on him. It was China, I think, that did it. Of course, it was no joke in politics. His opponents made capital out of it against him. He had two fronts - the home front and the China front to fight on over China. So at last I saw this ever youthful man feeling the load of age and care, and I felt this to be tragic. But how many people live to that age, still so youthful, still so unspoilt by power!

Nanda: That is true, and everyone has his disappointments, you know.

Toynbee: Everyone has his disappointments, yes.

Nanda: You know you do not control events. You can control yourself, but you cannot control the Chinese. They will behave in their own way. But how did the Chinese attitude to India strike you - I mean this change in the Chinese attitude to India from, say, 1959-60 onwards? I mean this continual needling and continual provocation and then the attack? What could have motivated it?

Toynbee: I am puzzled over this, because India was China's best friend. She was China's advocate in the U.N., in the world, in the United States - with everybody. I do not think it was hostility to India as such. I think it was hostility to imperialism or colonialism as you may call it. My guess is that China was saying to herself, "some Englishman, McMahon - wasn't it? - imposed on us this frontier which India has inherited between herself and China. This is a British frontier, laid down when the British were powerful and when China was weak," and they - the Chinese were not going to accept it. I think China's test of getting back her traditional position of great importance in the world is to recover the frontiers she had before the Opium War. This is just a guess of mine. She is going all out now actually to quarrel with India over this territory which is of no intrinsic importance, because there is no strategic threat to China from India. India would never dream of attacking China. Besides, it would be quite impossible for even the greatest military power to attack China across Tibet.

Nanda: Impossible.

Toynbee: I think it was an almost academic insistence on getting back what China considered to be her rightful frontiers at the time when she had been a great power in the world. It was a very high price to pay for that, but I think this was China's mood. What would your idea be?

Nanda: I do not know. Mr. Nehru said at that time that he could not make a gift of the Himalayas to China. The Chinese idea of re-drawing the frontier was to come on this side of the mountains and to say: "this area belongs to us", and then to make India absolutely vulnerable. They could walk in any time.

The point, Mr. Nehru said, was that the Chinese frontiers were also drawn up by the Chinese Emperors, and that was imperialism of another kind.

Toynbee: This is my guess. My guess is that you will find that in the 18th or 17th century, the line on which China now insists was, from the Chinese point of view, the official frontier of China. When McMahon negotiated with China from strength, he probably set the frontier back to British India's advantage. My guess is that, if an Indian had negotiated the McMahon frontier with the Chinese on a basis of equality, the Chinese would not have minded it.

Nanda: That is not the impression Mr. Nehru carried, because he had been a champion of China in his own country and everywhere. He felt that the thing had not been

reciprocated.

Now, can you think of any other interesting incident when you visited Mr. Nehru at his house to dine with him or to meet him?

Toynbee: It was a family party. Mrs. Gandhi was acting as hostess. It touched me and my wife very much that he should have invited us in this intimate way so that we saw much more of him and his family circle than if it had been some formal party. That again was characteristic of his human , personal side.

The thing that intrigues me is, of course, his relations with Mahatma Gandhi, and how it was that Gandhi singled him out. They had such different backgrounds, different personalities.

Nanda: Well, I think this is a very interesting point. I have written on both and have been trying to puzzle it out myself. The basic thing about Gandhi is that he thought out every thing for himself at a young age. By the time he was about thirty, Gandhi's personality had been formed, the basic ideas were there. He was a man who did not learn from books. He learned from a few books like the Bible and the Gita, the Old Testament and Buddhism and so on. He also learnt from his own observations and the way things happened. He was in South Africa and he found the Indian minority there at a very great disadvantage. They were not treated as human beings; they had no means of redress because

they had no vote, and they were pocketing their insults as they were pocketing their profits, and they thought it was part of the job. But Gandhi had seen the impossibilities of the situation. So, in that predicament, Gandhi felt that there must be some means of resisting it. He said, "If I can find a method of resisting which avoids violence and avoids hatred, it could still be strong". One could still be tough. One could say, "I would not hate you, I would not hit you. But I would not accept what you are doing". And that was his principle. This he was able to work out.

Toynbee: Was it his own personal thing?

Nanda: A personal thing.

Toynbee: Did he get it from Indian traditions and did Ashoka have any influence on him?

Nanda: I do not think so.

Toynbee: It was just a matter of himself.

Nanda: I do not think Ashoka had any influence. Principally the influences on Gandhi were religious; the Gita, the Bible, the Sermon on the Mount, and may be, the influence of his mother.

Toynbee: Oh! I did not know about that.

Nanda: He was a little more feminine than most of us. We are all bi-sexual emotionally, and, may be, he had more of the mother in him. So, he tended to this

solution; that he would not hate, he would not hit, he would resist any kind of oppression or tyranny. Then, in that small Indian community - when there were only thousands, not millions - he knew the people and they knew him, what kind of man he was. Therefore, he was able to get their personal allegiance. They could remain non-violent in that small community; and he went on arguing with the South Africans, with the British in Natal...

Toynbee: So he was then quite a young man.

Nanda: He was a young man. And with the Dutch in the Transvaal, he went on doing this and over a period of say, about 15 years he formed his own personality and he perfected his own technique, and then he came to India.

Toynbee: He was practising law in South Africa?

Nanda: Yes, and he was a very successful lawyer. He was making about £5,000 a year, but he was not spending it upon himself. He gave it away. He was not interested in property. You may say that this was the Indian tradition of renunciation.

From 1915, when he came to India, till 1947, he remained in Indian public life in various ways: for the first five years not so much in politics but on the periphery of politics; from 1920 to 1947 in the centre of politics. But Gandhi had his own personal views on everything: on political technique, on religion, on philosophy, on

sex, on food habits, on sleep, on all kinds of things - he had worked it all out.

He did not take meat. He did not drink. Of course, he thought liquor was a bad thing. Lots of his followers ate meat. He would not enforce his own practice on other people. He believed in total abstinence, which you may think may be too much of a strain on human psychology. But he did not insist that other people should do the same thing, though he might advise them to do so.

Now, the last thing was the political technique. For him, non-violence was a matter of conviction, of very deep conviction. He would use it in personal relationship, in group relationships, in community relationships, and between nations. Now, non-violence in personal relations has been accepted by everybody. In our families, you know, we are non-violent with our children, with our parents, and with our sisters and brothers. We are not so non-violent with people outside our own circle. Between nations, of course, the thing does not arise. But Gandhi's point was that this is a principle not meant for family relationships only, but it should be extended in concentric circles, gradually it should extend. And his views on non-violence went very much further, very much beyond what you and I would accept, very much beyond what Nehru could accept.

Toynbee: You say: what Nehru would accept?

Nanda: I am coming to Nehru: Why it is that

Nehru, being so different, was acceptable to Gandhi? Well, it was not a question of Gandhi and Nehru. The fact was that there was hardly anyone in the Congress movement, or in the country, who accepted Gandhi's ideas, even on his political technique, 100 per cent. Some accepted it 25%, others 50%, 80%, or 90%. But his minimum was: "So long as you accept me as your leader, you will not preach or practise physical violence or verbal violence in public. If you are my disciples you will try not even to hate in the mind and in the heart". That was very difficult. But he said, "If you cannot do that, I can forgive you. But I cannot forgive you if you throw a stone at a British officer or you use a pistol. That I won't permit". So his minimum was: physical violence was to be avoided and also there was going to be no verbal violence either. You must not abuse people. You must control your temper. It was on this minimum level that the movement was built up among the millions. It could not have been built on metaphysical grounds of non-violence and <u>ahimsa</u> of the type which he accepted for himself. Now, Jawaharlal Nehru, Motilal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and many others accepted non-violence only as a technique in the peculiar conditions of India under Gandhi's leadership. I do not say that they were violent people. No, they were not, but they thought that, given human psychology as it is, it is very difficult to enforce Gandhi's own ideas completely. So Gandhi knew very well that it was not only Nehru, but many others in the party among his lieutenants, who did not believe in complete pacifism.

Toynbee: Of course, it is easier to be non-violent when you are not in power than when you are in power, politicially.

Nanda: Yes. His point was that if Gandhi had been in power he would have enforced it. But then he would not have been in power. You see, Gandhi's argument was (in 1942, he said so): "If I had waited until people had the same faith as I had, I would have remained in a minority of one". So that was not possible. But again, if you examine this movement over a quarter of a century, you will find that there was less violence than in any other movement of comparable size. And at least it was a conscious attempt on the part of the leader to reduce even hatred to the minimum.

Now, there were differences between Gandhi and Nehru. But they had a basic minimum on which the party could operate. And, may be, Gandhi felt that the ideas which Nehru was trying to practise - his belief in socialism, his belief in the unity of the country, his belief in contact with the rest of the world - were progressive ideas. He may have disagreed in detail with his colleagues. But they were the best men available and they were his own men in the sense that he had built them up. Gandhi was not a man who was monolithic inideas. Please observe how different his lieutenants were. Patel - he was party manager, a very able man, very patriotic, very practical; and Nehru, very able, but of a speculative mind: he could think of the future and past and so on. Rajagopalachari was very different. So was

Rajendra Prasad. Now, all these people went into the executive of the Congress and they looked up to Gandhi. But, since they were so different, the policy was always a compromise, the best possible compromise that could be arrived at in the circumstances.

Toynbee: Now the Congress had existed as a movement for about 20 years or more before Gandhi:

Nanda: The Congress movement had existed from 1885 to 1920 before Nehru came on the scene, say 35 years.

Toynbee: So it was amazing. You would have thought that it would have become hard set by that time, that it couldn't.....

Nanda: Two things Gandhi did. One was - he gave it a mass base and he created a new dynamic leadership.

Toynbee: For a party as old as that, it was an amazing achievement.

Nanda: And that they should have stayed like that from 1885 to 1947, that would make it, how many years? - 62 years. Otherwise, you know what happens to national movements. They split up. I do not know, but the contrast between Gandhi and Nehru, in personalities and politics, was there. But they had so much in common. Mr. Toynbee, did you meet Gandhi at all?

Toynbee: I only heard him once speak in London.

He made a speech and there was a lot of heckling afterwards: I noticed how unruffled he was. It was at - what was that Society of Friends house where they used to meet?

Nanda: In Euston.

Toynbee: Yes. He was in one sense a man up to all the political techniques, with the ready wit of a politician; another aspect, at the same moment, was that of a man totally remote from this kind of thing, aloof from it, he despised it. Yet he combined the two.

Nanda: How did the speech impress you at the time? Did you feel he was able to communicate his views to you, as it was?

Toynbee: Yes, he did. I recollected that he had learnt his law in London. The London auidence was something quite familiar to him. Now, in Mr. Nehru's case, it was obvious that he had a foothold in the West. But Gandhi had just as great a foothold in the West, really. He kept this in the background, but when necessary, it came out. He was entirely au fait with that meeting of Westerners.

TNanda: Gandhi's appeal was more to the religious elements here, to the Christians, Quakers and other deeply religious people. He had a special appeal for them.

// Toynbee: For my generation, certainly. Half of my friends were killed in the First World War. Ever since

then, violence has been one of the foremost things of my life - the loss of those young men in that war. So anyone who comes along with non-violence at once makes me wish to follow.

I think Gandhi was also an unconscious prophet of the atomic age. Though his life just overlapped the atomic age chronologically, he was really a pre-atomic age man in his career. Yet he found the right technique for bringing about political changes without loss of human life in a way that is possible in the atomic age without self-destruction. So I am saying he was an unconscious prophet of the atomic age.

Nanda: If I may put it in a different way: what he had been saying acquired new urgency, a new meaning after the splitting of the atom. He had been saying all this from 1906 onwards.

Toynbee: It has always been true.

Nanda: It has always been true, and he had been practising it in South Africa and in India, but it was only in 1945 after the atomic bomb became a real threat to mankind .....

Toynbee: Before the atomic age, most people got away with a good deal of violence without complete destruction. Gandhi preached non-violence in an age when that was still possible. This was remarkable and exceptional. It is easy, after the arrival of the atomic age, for people

to understand this. But Gandhi understood it before the atomic age.//

Nanda: What is your feeling now? Do you think that Gandhi's influence in future will grow as the consciousness of nuclear danger grows?

Toynbee: I myself believe so, and I think he will become a symbol for a new way in which human beings have to behave. We are being terribly slow since 1945 in changing our behaviour. Human beings are like that. Well, may be, they are still living mentally in the pre-atomic age. But I am an optimist in the sense that I do not believe that the human race is going to destroy itself. For this reason I think that Gandhi will become a symbol of a new way in which human beings have got to behave.

Nanda: How far do you think Nehru tried to carry the spirit of Gandhi's teaching into international relations in those twenty years?

Toynbee: I think he did. I think one reason why the Chinese gave such a shock to him was this. He thought that perhaps the Asian peoples who had experienced imperialism would have had this change of heart. I think he built a lot of hope on that, and this hope was shattered by what China did. But, of course, Nehru being in office, in power, had different problems from Gandhi, hadn't he?

Nanda: Gandhi would never have been in power.

Toynbee: He never accepted.

Nanda: He never would accept power because...

Toynbee: His accepting power would have been incompatible. He could not have been both Gandhi and been in power.

Nanda: Quite right. I remember a very interesting incident. When he started this agitation against the Rowlatt Act in 1919, against the British, one of his friends here; I think it was Henry Polak, who had worked with him in South Africa, wrote to him, "Mr. Gandhi, please do not go so fast. Please wait. I know that, even if India were free, you would be in opposition. You are a born rebel." So he was born a non-conformist that way. He was not the man to be easily taken in by the plausible arguments of governments and so on. He could also be very very original and creative. He would not accept a solution because Government - any Government, his own or any Government - said it should be accepted because it was politic to do so, expedient to do so.

Toynbee: Unfortunately, politics is a very unsuccessful side of human life.

Nanda: Yes, quite.

Toynbee: In both domestic affairs and foreign affairs politicians play politics.

Nanda: Well, the difficulty, as Nehru said about politics, is that a politician or a statesman has to

carry people with him. Even if he knows the right path, he has sometimes to make a compromise, provided it is in the right direction. He cannot carry people the whole way. Then he goes with them part of the way, because he knows that they are not yet ready to go the whole way, and that is the difficulty of the politician.

Toynbee: He has to choose between dropping out of politics or compromising.

Nanda: Then I think it may be he deludes himself. But he thinks that if he drops out of politics, the other person will take it in a different direction completely.

Toynbee: Gandhi would never have put himself in that position, I suppose.

Nanda: Gandhi always had enough to do. He felt that it is not people in government only who could do good. His argument was that there are people, like Nehru and Patel and others, who are able administrators, who are able people, who know the world. But he said: "I can do useful work outside the government. There are so many other things which I can do which the government cannot do."

Toynbee: I forget how old he was.

Nanda: He was born in 1869. He died in 1948. So he was 78.

Toynbee: He might have lived longer. He might

have lived for several years, anyway, into the period of independence.

Nanda: But on the other hand, as Nehru said, he would not have liked to see Gandhi dodder along into 101 or 102 years, like that. He passed out in a dramatic fashion. In one way it was very ironic, and in another way very befitting that this apostle of non-violence should have died through violence.

Toynbee: Through violence, because of his championship of the Muslims, the under-dogs: they were to be championed.

Nanda: Well, his approach was this. This kind of communal violence broke out in different parts of the sub-continent . In Calcutta it was between Hindus and Muslims. In East Bengal the Muslims had committed aggression on the Hindus; in Bihar, Hindus on the Muslims; in the Punjab, Sikhs on the Muslims or the Muslims on the Sikhs, and so on. He said: "it makes no difference to me which community has started this thing. I am interested in who is going to stop it. I would not apportion any blame. Whoever commits violence makes a mistake." So he wanted to raise it above this kind of argument and he plunged himself into it either by fasting or by something which would shame people into making peace. You know that famous phrase of Lord Mountbatten's: "one man boundary force." In the Punjab, Lord Mountbatten had set up a boundary force of about 50,000 troops to keep the peace and they could not do so; there were

riots. Here, in Calcutta Gandhi alone had fasted and kept peace in Bengal.

Toynbee: Yes. Astonishing!

Nanda: The other thing is about Gandhi's fasts. How did they strike you? How did they appeal to you? Do you think they were an irrelevance in politics?

Toynbee: Well, obviously it was not irrelevant in Indian politics. I heard an Indian Muslim describe his own feelings and the feelings around him day after day - I forget which fast it was of Gandhi - and how this immense moral pressure is brought to bear on people. Do you think this is peculiar to India? The suffragettes here fasted, didn't they, some of them - went on hunger strike?

Nanda: But the difference is that Gandhi never fasted, except I think, a couple of times, when he was in Government's custody. Often he fasted against his own people. He did not say: "I am going to fast unto death unless you give India independence by tomorrow or in ten days' time". He did not lay down impossible conditions. When he fasted, he said: "Look, I am going to fast unless you stop the violence in the streets". That was a highly sensible, urgent, practical appeal to the people. But he did not say: "Unless you people subscribe one hundred million pounds for such and such a cause, I am going to fast myself to death". He did not do that kind of thing. Nor did he say that "Unless Mr. Jinnah accedes to what I say, I am going to fast".

Or, "The British Government must give me complete dominion status within the next six months, or I am going to fast". He did not do that kind of thing.

Toynbee: He did not try to dictate by fasting.

Nanda: My point is that he knew that his fasting was a very delicate weapon, and it was used by him very delicately and very carefully. He said it was personal to him. He did not recommend fasting to other people, because he knew that he had a peculiar position with the people of India. That is, if he fasted against them, they would respond. But some other people might die and the public might not respond. His argument was that, if he was in the wrong and fasted, he could only harm himself; but if he was in the right and he could convert people, then he could do some good. It was always, you are quite right, the moral pressure. But the moral pressure was not against those who opposed him, but against those who loved him. Gandhi was most of the time fasting against his own people.

When did you last see Mr. Nehru?

Toynbee: In 1961 it must have been.

Nanda: After that visit which you had described you had found him in good shape when you left him?

Toynbee: Not that last time, no. I felt that the load was becoming too heavy for him. I think he felt very deeply that capital was being made against him in

Parliament by the Opposition. This is democratic parliamentary politics.

Nanda: He said so.

Toynbee: He accepted this as such, but it hurt him all the same, I think.

Nanda: He was very sensitive to what was said in the Parliament.

Toynbee: He was a very acoomplished parliamentary politician. He was a master in answering parliamentarty questions, but he minded all the same.

Nanda: He was very sentitive, because he had a great respect for Parliament. Therefore what was said there....

Toynbee: He took it very seriously. Like a very different man, Churchill, he took Parliament very seriously.

Nanda: What is your estimate of Nehru's place in history? How will he appear 25 or 50 years hence?

Again, it is an exercise in imagination. But with your great knowledge of the past and your ability to project things in the future.....

Toynbee: Well, since India got independence, we have seen many other countries get it. We have seen the

enormous difficulty of launching independence after colonial regimes, and what tragedies there have been in many countries. What I would say is that Mr. Nehru gave India an exceptionally good start. You see, as long as there is a foreigner ruling, you have one very simple objective: you have to get rid of foreign rule. The moment you have done that, all the practical problems of ruling ourselves come up: economic problems, problems of linguistic areas, all kinds of rather tricky and intractable things. Nehru had to make sudden decisions for dealing with these quite different questions. I would say that he will be remembered as a leader of India, the principal liberated country in this area and the first Prime Minister of the greatest liberated country he was more successful in making the transition than anyone else has been in this period. Nehru was not completely successful, but no politician can be completely successful.

<u>Nanda</u>: No politician or statesman can solve all problems for all time.

<u>Toynbee</u>: No.

<u>Nanda</u>: And his concern for international peace, you know, was very great.

<u>Toynbee</u>: That will be remembered.

<u>Nanda</u>: Many people today may be saying that he was probably too idealistic in trying for that. But don't you think it was worth making an effort for, anyway? His approach to international relations in the 1950's was that

these power blocs had become monolithic at that time and they could not speak to each other, and they were trying to get most of the smaller powers to line up behind them. And if that went on, the world would be polarised between East and West, and things would not be even thought of and discussed on their merits, but on what bloc A says and what bloc B says. So he stood in between. He tried to make friends with both. I do not know whether I am right in making this interpretation. He stood in between these blocs and tried to make friends with both.

Toynbee: I think this is true. It is also true that he had very fanatical blocs to deal with, too.

Nanda: To begin with they were very fanatical, but towards the end, the blocs were beginning to talk to each other and they were also splitting. They were losing their cohesion on both sides. Therefore, to that extent, Nehru had succeeded in helping the world to tide over a difficult period. In these times, if you can tide over five or ten years at a time, it is good enough. So do you think that this service which he did to international peace - of course he was not the only person; there were other forces working - but do you think that his contribution to this kind of release of tensions was significant in that period?

Toynbee: Yes. Again, I think, he will be a symbol of a new attitude in international relations.

Nanda: And you feel that eventually this

symbol and this new attitude will prevail? As you said, you are optimistic. Nehru will be judged by how the world is 25 years hence. If it comes to this kind of relaxed international relations, when Governments begin to co-operate with each other, then they will remember those people who tried to help them in this, and Nehru would be foremost among them. But if we blow ourselves up, then naturally we won't be thinking of people who tried to help us.

Toynbee: I am just now back from the United States and I think that the rising generation, the young people from about 16 to 25 - of those ages - will be much more in line with Nehru and with Gandhi in feeling than the middle-aged Americans today, who are very much upset by seeing the wind of change in America coming on. I think the wind is moving in the Gandhi-Nehru direction.

Nanda: You think that their influence will remain as a constructive force?

Toynbee: I believe so myself. Yes, I do.

Nanda: It is very heartening.

Toynbee: India certainly will have troubles. She is going to have more of them, of course. But she gave us these two men.

Nanda: Well, we are 550 millions in a sub-continent. We are bound to have problems. Even small countries have problems, if you read their newspapers. As

you know, in press reporting these days only bad news gets across to other peoples. If there is a flood or an earthquake or a train disaster, we read about it. We do not read about good things.

Toynbee: This linguistic nationalism, the East European kind that has arisen in India now - well Mr. Nehru was both unsympathetic and....

Nanda: True, but it is being exaggerated. To some extent linguistic nationalism is a recognition of regional aspirations and feelings. And one way of coping with it is not to try to suppress it. The Russians have been able to manage it. I think the British have not tried to suppress the Welsh. If we think of India, not in terms of Britain, which is a very small country, or France, but of the whole of Europe, and we have 15 languages that are recognised, naturally we cannot do away with them. But I do think the bonds between the various parts of India are any looser than they were in the past. In fact, they are strengthening. The only thing is that in our country, as in other democratic countries, people can say what they want to say. And when you read those things in the papers you think that we are going to pieces. This is because we talk about them and write about them. On the other hand, you get a monolithic form of government, where everything is censored. You get only "good" news and you begin to feel that country is doing very well.

Toynbee: I came back from Greece on Sunday, so

I know all about this. If you read the Greek newspapers today, you would think that Greece was in a splendid condition! When I was talking to a girl who is a journalist, she described how they always had to have at least two or three articles in reserve, in case the first was rejected. They have to make their plans. They have to appear as if they had not been censored. Dreadful!

Nanda: Thank you very much.

Toynbee: Well, I have very much enjoyed this opportunity you have given me. My feeling for Mr. Nehru is very deep. Though some may say my acquaintance was rather slight, it meant an awful lot to me.

Nanda: I am sure his meetings with you meant a lot to him also. His interest in history was a very deep and lasting interest.